

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 LAB-04

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R 161546Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8541

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6360

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER RC POLITICAL ROLE

REF: LISBON A-221 DATED AUGUST 27, 1976

SUMMARY: A PUBLIC CONTROVERSY ERUPTED OVER AN APPARENT EFFORT BY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL "POLITICALS" TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS WITH RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. WHILE THE CONSTITUTION GIVES THE RC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW AND HEARING PUBLIC PETITIONS, OPERATIONAL MILITARY AND THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS ARE ALARMED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS AN EFFORT BY MELO ANTUNES AND FRIENDS TO INJECT THE RC FURTHER INTO POLITICS. PRESIDENT EANES IS UNSYMPATHETIC TO AN EXPANDED RC ROLE. END SUMMARY.

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1. RC DEBATES ITS ROLE: PUBLICATION BY THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS OF PROPOSED INTERNAL RC REGULATIONS ON THE EVE OF THEIR SEPT 15 DEBATE BY THE COUNCIL HAS SPARKED CONTROVERSY OVER THE FUTURE RC ROLE IN THE POLITICAL ARENA. IN A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO DAMP DOWN SPECULATION, ACTING RC SPOKESMAN CPT MARQUES JUNION, ON ENTERING THE MEETING, TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE RC WOULD CONFINED ITSELF TO A DISCUSSION OF "INTERNAL MILITARY LEGISLATION." THE BRIEF RC STATEMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING DID NOT TOUCH UPON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE.

2. CRESPO DRAFT IS BONE OF CONTENTION: AT THE CENTER OF THE CONTROVERSY ARE TWO PROPOSED ARTICLES OF INTERNAL RC REGULATIONS SAID TO HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY CDR VITOR CRESPO. PRINCIPAL PROVISIONS INCLUDE:

- A 5-MEMBER PERMANENT COMMITTEE SHALL STUDY LEGISLATION SUBMITTED TO THE RC FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW.
- THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE MAY REQUEST THE PRESIDENT TO CONVENE THE FULL RC TO STUDY THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LEGISLATION.
- WORKING GROUPS SHALL BE FORMED IN THE RC DEALING WITH THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:
 - (A) NATIONAL DEFENSE AND ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE ARMED FORCES;
 - (B) JUSTICE AND DISCIPLINE;
 - (C) EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL INFORMATION;
 - (D) ECONOMY AND LABOR;
 - (E) REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY;
 - (F) EDUCATION AND CULTURE;
 - (G) SOCIAL AFFAIRS.
- THE WORKING GROUPS WILL BE CHARGED WITH KEEPING RC MEMBERS INFORMED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND FOR REVIEWING PETITIONS ADDRESSED TO THE RC UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION.

3. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NAMED: THE CHAIRMANSHIPS OF THE ELEVEN SPECIALIZED COMMITTEES OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC WERE DISTRIBUTED SEPT 15 TO THE 4 LEADING PARTIES. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRE-ARRANGED FORMULA FOR PROPORTIONAL ALLOCATION OF ASSEMBLY CHAIRMANSHIPS
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(REFTEL) THE PS RECEIVED FOUR CHAIRS; THE PPD THREE; THE CDS TWO; AND THE PCP TWO AS FOLLOWS:

- SOCIALIST PARTY
- LABOR;
- ECONOMY, FINANCE AND PLANNING;
- NATIONAL DEFENSE;
- FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION
- PPD:

RIGHTS, LIBERTIES AND GUARANTEES;
SOCIAL SECURITY AND HEALTH;
SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT;
-- CDS:
EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE;
INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL POWER;
-- PCP:
AGRICULTURE AND FISHING;
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS.

4. COMMENT: THE ISSUE RAISED BY THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE PROPOSED INTERNAL RC REGULATIONS IS THE FUTURE RC POLITICAL ROLE. RC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW AND FOR RECEIVING THOSE PETITIONS ARE PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONSTITUTION. THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS AND "OPERATIONAL" MILITARY ARE ALARMED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS AN EFFORT BY THE "POLITICAL" MILITARY TO SET UP PARALLEL POWERS TO THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. THEY VIEW THE PROPOSALS AS PART OF A CONCERTED EFFORT BY MELO ANTUNES AND HIS SUPPORTERS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE AN EXPANDED POLITICAL ROLE FOR THE COUNCIL. PRESIDENT EANES IS UNSYMPATHETIC TO AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR THE COUNCIL (REFTEL). IT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE IN THE CARDS.

5. THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS THE PRINCIPAL WINNER IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF ASSEMBLY CHAIRMANSHIPS; THE OUTCOME WAS NEVER IN DOUBT. THE SOCIALISTS RECEIVED THE FOUR MAJOR COMMITTEES THAT IT SOUGHT. THE PCP WAS FRUSTRATED IN ITS EFFORT TO CHAIR THE LABOR COMMITTEE. SOCIALIST ASSEMBLY LEADER ANTONIO REIS TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOCIALISTS HAD AGREED RELUCTANTLY TO GIVE THE COMMUNISTS ONE IMPORTANT COMMITTEE CHAIR--AGRICULTURE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT REMAINING COMMITTEE SEATS WERE DISTRIBUTED ACCORDING TO OVERALL
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ASSEMBLY STRENGTH AND THE PCP COULD NOT DOMINATE THE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE.
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